

REMARKS

In the present Amendment, claim 1 has been amended herein to recite that the electrically conductive paste comprises a dispersant. Support for the amendment is found, for example, in the last full paragraph on page 10 of the originally filed specification. Accordingly, claim 19 has been canceled, and claim 20 has been amended to depend from claim 1.

No new matter has been added, and entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested. Upon entry of the Amendment, claims 1, 4-18 and 20-24 will be pending.

Referring to page 4 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 4-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,951,666 (“Kodas”).

Applicants traverse and respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider in view of the amendment to the claims and the following remarks.

Without acquiescence in the merits of the rejection, claim 1 has been amended herein to recite an electrically conductive paste comprising a particulate silver compound, a reducing agent and a specific dispersant.

In contrast to the precursor compositions disclosed by Kodas, the dispersant of amended claim 1 prevents secondary aggregation. Therefore, the electrically conductive paste according to amended claim 1 has a low resistivity and has excellent preservation quality and stability. Moreover, even if the presently claimed electrically conductive paste is coated and then heated at a low temperature of from 150 to 200 °C, the dispersant of amended claim 1 disappears. Therefore, the recited dispersants do not prevent a mutual fusing of the silver particles, and a coating having the above-mentioned low resistivity can be formed.

In contrast, the dispersants disclosed by Kodas are styrene allyl alcohol, ethyl cellulose, carboxy methylcellulose, nitrocellulose, polyalkylene carbonates, and/or ethyl nitrocellulose. Therefore, when one or more of the dispersants disclosed by Kodas are used, it is possible for secondary aggregation to occur. Moreover, when an electrically conductive composition employing the dispersant of Kodas is coated and then heated at a low temperature of 150 to 200 °C, the dispersant will remain, and therefore, the quality of the composition is deteriorated.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the §§102 and 103 rejections of claims 1 and 4-24 based on Kodas.

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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